UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS SCHOOL
WEAPONS TRAINING BATTALION
TRAINING COMMAND
2300 LOUIS ROAD (C478)
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5036

STUDENT OUTLINE

MAGTF OPERATIONS

CAC-PLAN-200

CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS PLANNER COURSE

M020AQD

NOVEMBER 2015

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

a. **TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE**. Given a mission, commander's intent, operations order, scenario, and CMO planning products (e.g. CMO staff estimate, CMO COA graphic and narrative, and a synch matrix, etc.), support stability operations planning, to enable the commander's decision making process by identifying instability and stability factors and to design activities to mitigate instability or reinforce stability factors within the operating environment in accordance with MCWP 3-33.1. (CACT-PLAN-2005)

b. **ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE**. Without the aid of references, identify MAGTF capabilities, in accordance with MCDP 1-0, Ch 2. (CACT-PLAN-2005a)

1. **MARINE AIR GROUND TASK FORCE**

a. **Introduction**

(1) The Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) is the term used to describe the principal Marine Corps organization for all missions across the range of military operations (ROMO). MAGTFs are a balanced air-ground, combined arms task organization of Marine Corps forces under a single commander that is structured to accomplish a specific mission.

(2) The MAGTF was formalized by the publishing of Marine Corps Order 3120.3 in December of 1963. It stated, "A Marine air-ground task force with separate air-ground headquarters is normally formed for combat operations and training exercises in which substantial combat forces of both Marine aviation and Marine ground units are included in the task organization of participating Marine forces." Expeditionary by nature, MAGTFs vary in size and capability according to their assigned or likely missions and are specifically equipped for rapid deployment by air or sea.

b. **Core Elements**. All MAGTFs consist of four core elements — a command element (CE), a ground combat element (GCE), an aviation combat element (ACE), and a logistics combat element (LCE). Although MAGTFs differ in size and capabilities, standard procedures exist for organizing any MAGTF and for planning and executing its operations.

c. **Modular and Expandable**. A key feature of the MAGTF is its expandability. Crisis response may require a larger force than what can initially be brought to bear. Being able to expand the original force — rather than replacing it with a larger one — promotes continuity of operations. The MAGTF's modular structure facilitates rapid expansion into a larger force as a situation demands by simply adding forces as needed to the core units of each existing element. In addition to its Marine Corps units, a MAGTF may have attached forces from other Services and nations, such as naval construction battalions or infantry/armor brigades.

(1) **Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF)**. A MEF is comprised of a MEF Headquarters Group, Marine Division, Marine Air Wing and Marine Logistics Group. For example, the II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) is composed of a headquarters element, the 2D Marine Division, 2D Marine Aircraft Wing and the 2D Marine Logistics Group, all based on the East Coast.

(2) **Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)**

(a) A MEB is larger than a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) but smaller than a MEF. The MEB is capable of conducting missions across the ROMO and varies in size. It is constructed around a reinforced infantry regiment, a composite Marine aircraft group, and a brigade service support group. The Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), commanded by a general officer (usually a Major General or sometimes a Brigadier General), is task-organized to meet the requirements of a specific situation. It can function as part of a joint (or combined) task force (CJTF). MEB CEs will also function as the MEF Forward, providing an additional CE option for the MEF. Another characteristic is the ability to composite forward and merge rapidly deploying Marine Corps forces into a cohesive, agile MAGTF scaled to the mission.

(b) MEBs will often be formed in stride by forward deployed forces under a general officer-led MEB CE. Examples of this were demonstrated in relief operations in Haiti during 2010, where two amphibious ready groups (ARG)/MEUs composited to form a MEB. Furthermore, we have recently shown the ability of a CJTF-capable CE to deploy rapidly and command disparate composited forces during initial operations to resolve crises and relieve suffering in the aftermath of the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami, as well as in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

(c) 1st MEB is embedded within I MEF and is regionally oriented to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and supports the Global Response Force (GRF). 2D MEB is a standing CE located in Camp Lejeune, NC and regionally oriented on U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and U.S. European Command (EUCOM), and also support the GRF. MARCENT Forward (FWD) is a MEB – like command capable of becoming a MEB CE to achieve GCC objectives. 3D MEB is a standing CE located in Okinawa, Japan and is regionally oriented to U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM).

(3) **Marine Expeditionary Unit**

(a) Usually the smallest type of MAGTF is the MEU. The command element is the standing headquarters for the MEU, usually headed by a Colonel. The GCE is a battalion landing team (BLT), which is composed of an infantry battalion reinforced with tanks, artillery, engineers, amphibious vehicles, light armored vehicles, and other ground combat assets. The ACE is composed of a composite squadron of fixed

and rotary-wing aircraft and an Air Traffic Control (ATC) and command and control detachment. The LCE consists of a Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) which handles the logistics and administration needs of the MEU. The specific makeup of the MEU can be customized based upon the task at hand; additional artillery, armor, or air units can be attached, including squadrons of MV-22B Osprey and AV-8B Harrier jets. There are usually three MEUs assigned to each of the U.S. Navy Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, with another MEU based on Okinawa.

(b) The MEUs, embarked aboard Navy ARGs, form ARG/MEUs. The ARG/MEUs provide continuous, forward naval presence in key regions to conduct steady-state security cooperation, military engagement, and deterrence, as well as immediate response to episodic crises and contingencies. The ARG/MEUs may also be called upon to support major operations and campaigns in a variety of ways, such as enabling the introduction of other forces, acting as the lead echelon for expansion to a larger formation, or providing the Geographic Combatant Commander an inherently mobile and flexible sea-based reserve. When embarked aboard an ARG, which is commanded by a Navy Captain (or Commodore), a support relationship is normally established between the MEU and the ARG.

(c) MEU CEs will often use an abbreviated form of the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP) to support operational planning. The rapid response planning process (R2P2), is a time-constrained version of the MCPP. The R2P2 enables the Marine expeditionary unit (MEU) to plan and begin execution of certain tasks within six hours and is highly dependent on the use of standing operating procedures.

(4) **Special Purpose MAGTF (SPMAGTF)**

(a) When situations arise for which a MEU or other unit is either inappropriate or unavailable, a SPMAGTF is formed. A SPMAGTF may be of any size—but normally no larger than a MEU — with tailored capabilities required to accomplish a particular mission. It may be task-organized from non-deployed Marine Corps forces or formed on a contingency basis from a portion of a deployed MAGTF. Regimental-level headquarters often assume the role as a SPMAGTF CE and may conduct training in anticipated mission skills prior to establishment. A SPMAGTF may deploy using commercial shipping or aircraft, inter-theater airlift, amphibious shipping, or organic Marine aviation.

(b) Frequently, SPMAGTFs have conducted sea-based security cooperation activities, such as *Unitas*, *Southern Partnership Station* and *Africa Partnership Station*. Others have been formed to provide sea-based foreign humanitarian assistance or support to civil authorities or participate in freedom of navigation operations.

(c) An important type of SPMAGTF is an alert contingency MAGTF. Each of the MEFs usually maintain an alert contingency MAGTF as an on-call, rapid crisis response force. A MEF commander may prescribe that an alert contingency MAGTF be ready to initiate deployment to any location worldwide within a certain number of days or hours, depending on the indications and warnings associated with an emerging crisis. Because it may need to deploy so rapidly, readiness is paramount. Equipment and supplies intended for use as part of an alert contingency MAGTF are identified and, where appropriate, staged for immediate embarkation. The alert contingency MAGTF usually airlifts to a secure airfield and carries its initial sustainment. Deployment by air necessitates that the size and weight of an alert contingency MAGTF be kept to an absolute minimum. An alert contingency MAGTF may employ independently or in conjunction with amphibious, maritime prepositioning, or other expeditionary forces. The alert contingency MAGTF is often constituted around a MEB CE.

2. **MAGTF CAPABILITIES**. As described above, MAGTF capabilities vary with the size of the MAGTF. The remainder of the class will address MAGTF capabilities as they relate to the MEU.

a. **MEU Mission Essential Tasks**. MEUs are trained and certified to operate across the ROMO. Missions include:

(1) Advance force operations

(2) Maritime interdiction operations (MIO) including visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS)

(3) Amphibious assault

(4) Amphibious raid

(5) Humanitarian assistance (HA)

(6) Stability operations

(7) Noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO)

(8) Airfield / port seizure

(9) Theater security cooperation (TSC) activities

(10) Aviation operations from expeditionary shore-based sites

(11) Joint and combined operations

(12) Tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel (TRAP)

(13) Expeditionary strike

b. **Command Element**. The MEU CE will typically consist of approximately 250 personnel who represent a wide array of capabilities and force enablers. Among the capabilities is a civil-military operations (CMO) planner (by T/O an E-7), but more frequently a small (usually 4) civil affairs (CA) team. Other related capabilities include information operations personnel, public affairs, combat camera, judge advocate(s), law enforcement personnel – capabilities to enable CMO.

c. **Ground Combat Element**. The GCE will typically consist of approximately 1,200 personnel centered around the BLT. Their capabilities are primarily focused on offensive, defense and stability tasks as well as MEU-specific requirements. These include amphibious assaults, amphibious raids, airfield seizure, NEO, HA, embassy reinforcement and TSC (e.g., Security Force Assistance).

d. **Aviation Combat Element**. The ACE will typically consist of approximately 500 personnel centered around a composite squadron. The exact make-up of airframes embarked may vary based on aircraft availability, projected mission sets and shipping. Regardless, the ACE is prepared to fulfill the six functions of Marine aviation.

e. **Logistics Combat Element**. The LCE will typically consist of approximately 300 personnel centered around the CLB. LCE capabilities are designed to support the MAGTF with 15 days organic sustainment. Specific capabilities which impact and facilitate CMO include:

(1) Transportation operations

(2) General engineering operations

(3) Earth moving

(4) Construction and repair

(5) Electrical support

(6) Water purification, production, storage, and distribution

(7) Health services

(8) Explosive Ordnance Disposal

(9) General services (postal, ammo)

(10) Humanitarian assistance

(11) Evacuation control center operations

f. **Equipment**. A numerical list of a typical MEU table of equipment is beyond the scope of this class. However, notable end items the CMO planner should be familiar with include: assault amphibious vehicles, medium tactical vehicles, high mobility multi-wheeled vehicles, light armored vehicles, MV-22 tilt rotors, CH-53E helicopters, UH-1 Hueys, and RQ-21 small tactical unmanned air systems. Additionally, CMO planners should consider the ARG/MEU ability for power generation and water production. While not all inclusive, these platforms and capabilities all have CMO application.

g. **Amphibious Ready Group**. The ARG is the most frequently employed type of amphibious task force (ATF) organization that is formed to conduct amphibious operations. Together the ARG/MEU comprise an Amphibious Force (AF).

(1) An ARG consists of a minimum of three ships, usually an amphibious assault ship (LHD or LHA), an amphibious transport dock ship (LPD) and an amphibious dock landing ship (LSD).

(2) In addition to the ships, the principal Navy elements of the ARG are a Naval Beach Group element that includes Beachmasters who control the movement of personnel and equipment across the beach, Assault Craft Unit (ACU) elements that bring the landing craft, both Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) and Landing Craft Utility (LCU) that move equipment and personnel from the ship to the shore, the Tactical Air Control Squadron (TACRON) element that provides aviation control, a

Fleet Surgical Team (FST) that provides enhanced medical support and a Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) element that provides airborne search and rescue, vertical replenishment, air and sea defense and limited assault support.

(3) From the perspective of the CMO planner, an invaluable capability the ARG brings is fresh water production. For example, the LHA/D can produce 200,000 gallons per day, the LSD 60,000 gallons per day, and the LPD 17 72,000 gallons per day!

(4) **Noncombatant Evacuation and Medical**. In the past twenty years over 20,000 American and partner nation citizens whose lives were in danger in a host nation have been evacuated by U.S. Marines from amphibious ships to a safe haven. Additionally, the ARG/MEU team can provide significant assistance in response to humanitarian and disaster events. Medical capabilities include:

(a) ARG

1. 7 physicians and 3 dentists

2. 5-9 operating rooms

3. 7-25 intensive care beds

4. 730-800 ward and triage beds

(b) MEU

1. 2 physicians and 2 physician assistants

2. 78 corpsmen

3. Shock trauma platoon

4. 30-bed evacuation ward

5. casualty evacuation

REFERENCES:

MCDP 1-0, Marine Corps Operations
HQMC Amphibious Ready Group and Marine Expeditionary Unit Overview

Notes: